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## Working for Wages

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## WORKING FOR WAGES

*for Geof Hewitt*

Sorry pass! True decrease in family fortune  
to feel a Pinch there in the pocket,  
so close to the family jewels.  
This time it isn't Love's confusion  
with a full moon pulling blood  
to turgid crisis. It's the Big One:  
Money—a true Chekopian theme.

Fear, Hubris, Avarice, Envy—Yeah,  
Yeah, Yeah, all these and more apply.  
We've all read the same "texts,"  
watched the same films in the same  
stale darkness. Come on, get off  
your high horse; you know those  
sticky floors, stink of sperm  
and popcorn. And sure, our common  
culture is great solace, but after  
eight days of steady rain I awoke  
to a bleak Fact. This hand,  
which I would write like Whitman  
with, is hammered to a house  
I cannot sell—nailed to the single  
board free of dry-rot.

How did the wise Russian doctor  
worm such dignity out of Real Estate?  
It must be more than word choice,  
that cant I teach as "diction."  
No "techniques" can save me now,  
I'm coming clean. I have worked  
for wages instead of salvation.  
Instead of verse, I have recited  
my bibliography like a sonorous

chant of the Gaelic Dead. Oh,  
coarse jangle! I have thrown  
down my deeds before the college  
dean like money bags on meadhall  
oak. While rain soaked thick  
the boards of this old house  
and sun was sucking the last sap,  
I schemed and bartered.

Now the wind whispers to me  
through spaces weather left.  
“Fresh air, fresh air,” it gasps.  
It is a low and saddened voice,  
but still free and still urgent  
with an unregretted choice.